

NH Tidal Energy Commission Meeting Minutes

NH Department of Environmental Services
Pease Field Office, Portsmouth, NH
August 8, 2008, 1:00 PM

Members:

Rep. Thomas Fargo, Co-Chair, City of Dover
Ken Baldwin, Co-Chair, UNH
Ted Diers, Vice-Chair, NH Coastal Program
Brian Giles, NH Estuaries Project
Christopher Waszczuk, NH Department of Transportation
(A quorum of members was not present)

Other Attendees:

David Funk, Great Bay Stewards
Christian Williams, NH Coastal Program

Summary:

Co-chair Fargo stated that he had intended for commission members to approve the draft minutes from the April 11th and May 16th meetings. Since a quorum of members was not present, however, approval of the meeting minutes was postponed to the next meeting.

Co-chair Fargo then asked Co-Chair Baldwin to provide an update on planned/ongoing University of New Hampshire (UNH) activities relevant to the Commission. Co-chair Baldwin stated that UNH is involved with two grant proposals currently pending with the Department of Energy. The first proposal involves the creation of the New England Renewable Energy Consortium, a body comprised of academic institutions from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut. The Consortium was created in response to passage by Congress in December 2007 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. The Act requires that the Secretary of the Department of Energy award grants to institutions of higher learning (of consortia thereof) for the establishment of one or more National Marine Renewable Energy Research, Development, and Demonstration Centers. The Consortium is requesting \$1.4 million over a five year period. UNH's role in the Consortium would be to study and compare existing marine and hydrokinetic renewable energy technologies beneath the Little Bay and General Sullivan Bridges and offshore.

Co-chair Baldwin stated that UNH's second grant proposal with the Department of Energy is a 2-year collaborative effort with Lucent Technologies and Alden Laboratories to suspend a "Gorlov" Turbine from a small barge that would be attached/anchored to the General Sullivan Bridge.

Co-chair Fargo then reminded members that the Commission's final report to the legislature is due no later than November 1, 2008. He stated that the Permitting Requirements and the Environmental and Wildlife Impact Assessment chapters of the report are more or less complete. He then presented members with a "to do list" for completion of the remaining chapters of the report. The first item on the list identified the key sections of the Technical Feasibility, Cost & Benefits Analysis chapter, including, an estimate of harnessable power, a list of considerations for evaluating commercial and economic viability, and a discussion of whether the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) would allow equipment (e.g., a tidal energy turbine) in the channel beneath the bridges. Co-chair Baldwin stated that he has nearly completed a report that provides an estimate of the harnessable power. Once complete, he wants to provide an opportunity for the Technical Feasibility, Cost & Benefits Analysis Subcommittee to review it before releasing it to the full Commission. He also stated that while the subcommittee has not put much effort into identifying the considerations for evaluating commercial and economic viability, this information should and would be included in the final report. Attendees discussed so-called "water-to-wire" efficiency and how run-of-river hydropower experiences might constrain the economic viability estimates. Chris Waszczuk of NHDOT stated that the section focusing on whether the USCG would allow equipment in the channel beneath the bridges should also discuss the need for NHDOT approval for any equipment attached to the bridges. According to Mr. Waszczuk, this issue was discussed during a meeting in June between NHDOT and Co-chair Baldwin. The NHDOT favored an independent anchoring system and is willing to work with the Consortium to include specifications for same in the construction contracts for the Little Bay Bridge upgrade. Mr. Waszczuk agreed to provide a copy of the minutes from the meeting to Co-chair Fargo.

Co-chair Fargo stated that he would continue to work with Evan Mulholland of the Attorney General's Office to provide updated information for the Legal Issues chapter of the report. He stated that Commission members Jack Pare and Justin Richardson, neither of whom were in attendance, had agreed to supplement the Legal Issues chapter by providing a summary of the activities of the two entities that currently hold Federal Energy Regulatory Commission preliminary hydrokinetic energy permits in the Piscataqua River.

Members then reviewed the Commission's three primary conclusions, as presented by Co-chair Fargo at the May 16, 2008 meeting (meeting minutes can be found on the commission's web page at http://des.nh.gov/Coastal/ocean_policy.html). Vice-chair Diers recommended adding a fourth conclusion or preamble stating that the location beneath the Little Bay and General Sullivan Bridges is ideal because of the natural tidal restriction that exists there and because of the close proximity to the existing electrical grid and other infrastructure.

Co-chair Fargo noted that the activities of the Public and Business Community Outreach subcommittee have been on hold because of uncertainty in the type of tidal energy project that might move forward. Fargo stated that he would work with members of the subcommittee (not present at the meeting) to outline a plan for a future outreach effort, for their chapter of the Commission's final report.

Co-chair Fargo then asked members for recommendations for further legislation. Vice-chair Diers stated that he would contact Mr. Mulholland regarding the topic of submerged lands leasing.

The next commission meeting was scheduled for **Friday, September 26, 2008 at 1:00 PM at the NH Department of Environmental Services Pease Office in Portsmouth. Members agreed to submit via email draft versions of the appropriate sections of the report to Co-chair Fargo by September 12, 2008.**

Meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM